

796 leading to the main road away from the town or village is a measure to make
 753 sure that all descendant-less spirits and those spirits who are the results
 of undue or accidental deaths will be sent away so that they will not be able
 to create trouble or wreck vengeance on innocent souls by means of the epidemic.

796 (b) The Worshippers' Explanations. - These explanations are neither
 753 as precise nor as uniform as that of the priests. The word "worshipper" needs
 124 a word of definition. The author cannot decide whose belief is genuine or
 firmer and whose is false or less firm. He can only use the criterion of
 external behavior. In this way he regards as worshippers not only those who
 subscribe financially or by work to these prayer meetings but also those who
 do not belong to the few agencies of outside influence such as the college,
 the middle school and the hospital, and who do not exclusively resort to modern
 measures of sanitation and injection but passively take the prayer meetings
 as a matter of course.

In all, through personal inquiries, the investigator has collected about sixty statements. From a review of these statements he has been able to distinguish the following categories:

1. One type of statements gives the questioner the impression: "Why ask? Isn't it natural enough?" To this category belongs the answer given by the watcher of a public granary in the Temple of God of Literature in Area F. He said: "When there is general illness, there is prayer meeting." No amount of explanatory effort on the part of the investigator could make him give a different answer. He knows nothing about the prayers uttered by the priests. He is about 45 years of age and has a wife and children. He and his family have not had any injections. Another man, one of about fifty, a dye-shop keeper, is almost blind of trachoma. He was the sole person on worshipping duty in Area E prayer meeting. That means that the man knelt on the altar for three days and four evenings till 12:00 P.M. or later except for brief intermissions. The author had hoped that this man would have much to say about the prayer meeting but was disappointed to receive the following answer: "That (prayer meeting) is because there is Wen Sickness." He would not mention anything about ghosts or spirits at all. When the author pursued his query further, the man simply pulled up his trousers and showed the author his badly wounded knees, while remarking: "You see, both knees are sore from kneeling." The majority of this class of statements refer to the meetings by saying, "This is doing a good deed."

2. A second type of statements is more philosophical. It may be represented by the statement of a cloth and gold dealer of about 38 years of age, who used to travel among several western Yunnan and Burma cities like T'ung Tush, Mykyina, and Paoshan, and had returned to West Town just two months before the onset of the epidemic. He contributed the sum of fifteen dollars to the cholera prayer in his street. He said, "The prayer is good for appeasing the spirits so that the Wen will not continue. I give some money because I want to do my part, not for anything else." When the query was pursued further, the man turned to psychological terms: "You outsiders need not fear the epidemic or other catastrophe in a strange locality at all. When I went out into strange places I know nothing about their gods; I did not fear." "When you walk over a tomb and do not realize that it is a tomb, you are not afraid."

Regarding the doings of the priests in these prayer meetings he said, "Although I know how to read and write a little, I don't know what is

written in their (the priests') books. No scholars do -- their Chiao (or creed) is a different one. ... We only pay them, and what they sing or pray are not matters for us to dictate. We just let them do what they deem necessary."

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This man's attitude of indifference towards the priests' incantations and scripture-reading represents, in the author's opinion, that of a large number of the inhabitants toward these prayer meetings.

3. The third type of statements implies that who is or who is not struck by the epidemic is all a matter of fate (Chieh Shu), and that there is no really effective way of prevention or cure. It may best be illustrated by a man's statement concerning the medical powder which a Feng's Dispensary gave free of charge to all applicants. This powder is advertised by this dispensary throughout the town as very effective for curing cholera. One of the managers in the prayer meeting in Area I, a man of about forty-five, showed the author a packet of this powder which he carried in his pocket and asked the author to smell it. The stuff smelled like a combination of aromatic and incense. He and another older man agreed that the powder had been effective on some patients and entirely useless on others. Their explanation was that the question was one of fate and not of medicine or anything else. Yet somehow these two men seemed also to think that the medicines and the prayer meetings were not without their favorable effects. To prove the latter they pointed to the fact as evidence that by them (the beginning of the Fifth Moon) the force of the epidemic was gradually slackening.

4. The fourth class of statements gives one or more specific points of explanation. One man, about thirty years of age, a local shop assistant, said that the prayer meetings were for cleaning up the "an atmosphere (or air). He did not mention spirits or ghosts until the author advanced to him the idea of "catching ghosts" in a doubtful manner. Then he said: "Yes, yes, they (the prayer meetings) are for uplifting and sending away (Ch'ao Fu) all those descendantless ghosts and spirits! There have indeed been too many deaths of late."

Another man, about twenty-five years of age, who is a laborer of some description said that "the prayer meetings are for providing something (like material comfort) for homeless spirits so that they will go away and not harm the living." (The idea is that each of these spirits, like those which are caused by undue deaths, will usually claim a substitute.)

5. The fifth and last class of statements is from individuals who are very much conscious of the outsider's difference in ideas and customs from their own and yet feel that they cannot raise themselves over and above the doings and affairs of their community. Thus a mason, about thirty-two years of age, named Yang, offered the author at first the idea that the prayer meetings were for uplifting and sending away ghosts and spirits which were descendantless, a statement practically the same as that given by the first man illustrating the fourth class of statements. But as the conversation developed the man suddenly smiled and said: "Of course all these are superstitions." (Mi Hsin, the modern Chinese translation of the term).

Some statements from the only remaining Chu Jen in West Town, an aged man of about seventy and a highly honored soul among the populace, are even more striking. He first said that the prayer meetings were for the good of the community. Then he concluded, "Ah, when sickness, prayers and

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reading of sacred scriptures can keep it away." "The prayer meetings can clean up the locality" (never mentioned a word about the ghosts or spirits). The author then intentionally echoed in a very affirmative tone: "Of course, the prayer meetings have cleared up the epidemic." Upon hearing this the old man instantly responded: "But all these are simply superstitions." (again Mr Hsin, the modern Chinese translation of the term). The author then explained to him, following Malinowski, that the true effect of these prayers might be to stabilize the community during a crisis, in which case they would have their proper function. He made no comment on the author's explanation. It might be that he failed to comprehend what was being said. It might also be that he understood it but did not know how to reply properly. But he simply went on to say that the meetings were "affairs" of the community, and as a personality of standing in the community he had to patronize them. He also mentioned that the community had this sort of prayer meetings on a large scale only once before, in the seventh year of the Republic (about twenty-three years ago) when another Wen broke out (not cholera, but headache and vomiting). This old man contributed twenty dollars to one prayer meeting and twenty-five dollars to another. (He is not at all wealthy.) He headed the list of directors in the prayer meeting which took place at Area H (center of the town) in which the highest single donation was \$2,400.

This class of persons generally express, in one way or another, that they feel happier if they participate in the "affairs" of the community in the proper manner, whatever the outsider thinks about these "affairs". To this class also evidently belong some outstanding citizens of wealth in this community. The L. family, e.g. which is the chief supporter of the hospital and the middle school and the sole owner of the public library, spent over a million dollars for a pompous funeral in the traditional style and was the largest single contributor in at least two prayer meetings (one of which took place at the center of West Town). The R., another wealthy family, is also very much in the same position. A most interesting fact was observed in connection with a certain U. family which used to be the sixth or seventh wealthy family of the locality but which has been going down hill for some time. In a conversation Mrs. U. told the author that her family contributed five hundred national dollars to the cost of the prayer meeting in her street (Area B). But on examination of the list of contributors the author found that her husband's name was only associated with the insignificant sum of one hundred national dollars among donors of much larger sums.

[556] Incidents such as the last reveal that support lent to the prayer meetings is primarily a matter of social prestige, and the individual or family that has not been able to keep up with the expected level feels very much embarrassed.

An analysis of the conditions of these informants gives no definite impression as regards the significance of their age. The author had at first expected to find older people more conservative about the prayer meetings, giving more details, and the younger ones less so. This expectation is not met by the data. It is true that, as stated before, the elders and older people are in charge of the direction-managing and worshipping duties in practically all the prayer meetings. An inspection of some of the prayer meetings in session will also tell us that the spectators standing or sitting about the places of meeting during most hours of the day are either older people or children or older women. But such phenomenon is perhaps natural enough. The middle-aged or other able-bodied men and women have their work in shops, fields, and at home.

Probably the cases are not large enough in number to draw definite conclusions from them. One thing, however, seems fairly certain. This is that, generally speaking, the men who have had experience with the outside world either as travellers or traders, or having read very much about it, or having had intimate contact with the ways of the outsider, tend to be more philosophical and detached about the prayer meetings. Some of them think that all outsiders regard such prayer meetings as superstitions and, in a tone of embarrassment, would not hesitate to brand them as such to the outsider, but in their relations within the community they have to remain faithful to the indigenous ways.

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B. Other Measures to Combat the Epidemic

1. T'an Ching

The prayer meetings are not the only steps taken to ward off or conquer the epidemic. While the prayer meetings are being carried on here and there, other things happen as well. The first of these is T'an Ching, or ritual talk on the scriptures. The author is not clear as to the type of scriptures here referred to. On the platform where such exercises take place are the tablets or portraits of Confucius, Lao-tse and Buddha. The main event on this platform is the playing of music, both wind and string, by amateur volunteers. At intervals some read a kind of scripture which is usually Taoist and not Confucian. In one or two T'an Ching places the music consists of singing to the accompaniment of a three-stringed plucked instrument. They perform just like story singers.

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In Area J, T'an Ching took the place of a prayer meeting. In Area H and Area P, it took place at the same time as the prayer meetings. In Area H, the T'an Ching platform is just back of the prayer altar, and in Area P it is opposite the prayer altar.

The explanation given for such T'an Ching meetings seems to be of two kinds: one is that the gods and spirits should be pleased, and to soothe them by some light music (Ta Yueh) is the best. The other explanation is more vague. Both T'an Ching and the prayer meetings are of the same effect - both for the good of the community. It is a gesture of man's repentance so that the gods will withdraw the "en, or the epidemic, from the community. In more than half of the areas in which prayer meetings took place there were no T'an Ching meetings.

2. Volunteer Advertisements

Soon after the epidemic had started various hand-written or printed posters and advertisements began to appear in the streets. These are of two general categories - those giving actual medicine or methods of cure and those giving advice as regards the prevention of the disaster. The first kind is practically all medicinal and the second kind is mainly moral. Among the first category are either prescriptions for people to copy and then buy the medicine in any native dispensary, or notices of some ready-made mixture which will be given to applicants free of charge. The latter may be obtained from either a private home or a dispensary. The author has been able to collect different prescriptions and have them examined (1) from the point of view of modern medical knowledge with the aid of The Codex of Chinese Drugs (11)

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(11) World Book Company, Shanghai, 1934.

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757 spirit one may have offended unintentionally after all," was his conclusion.

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124 A local boy by the name of Yang is the author's friend. He is eighteen years of age and a third-year junior middle-school pupil. He was the tea-server at the prayer meeting in Area I and was most enthusiastic when the author inquired about the rituals of this prayer meeting. He had two free injections in the local hospital. He told the author that the hospital only gave one injection and that he knew the college infirmary gave three. He believed that the hospital was being economical and that one injection alone would be ineffective. So he insisted on having two, by telling the hospital people that he would pay for the second one if he were refused it. He thought that injection was the only way to prevent one from getting cholera, but working in the prayer meeting gave him a good time. "Besides," he said, "My parents want me to be at the prayer meeting."

The trader (formerly primary school teacher) mentioned in the above list, lives in a village south of the town and is thirty-six years of age. His mother is over seventy, and he has a wife and three children. His father recently died of cholera. At the time of the author's interview with him, the cholera prayer meeting in his village had just been over. All of his family members except his wife were injected. He firmly believed in the efficacy of the injection and told the author the following story to indicate the strength of his belief: At first his third son would not have the injection in spite of his persuasion. Then the boy became sick. The man then took the boy for an injection and some modern medicine. The boy was well at once. Paradoxically, he knows also that the injection is useless on a person after the cholera attack has already begun. He contributed fifty national dollars to the cause of the local prayer meeting and was one of its many officers.

Further detailed enumeration of all the thirty more cases is not necessary here. Though the cases studied are small in number and therefore from them a definite conclusion cannot be drawn, one or two impressions may be given. The author's primary impression from such a study is that the injection is another device against the epidemic, not the only device or even the most important one; it is a measure to be taken together with the other means of cure or prevention. To rely upon it alone, or any one thing alone, is thoroughly unwise. The cholera prayers are a thing that the community has always had and are a matter of course. For this reason the author found most of the children who (whether in school or not) were about the various prayer meetings had been injected, but most adults had not been injected. The parents do not mind having their children subjected to this novel device, but as for themselves, that is often a different question. It varies more with circumstances. The cook who with his wife runs the bachelors' mess for faculty members of the missionary college allowed his children and wife to take three injections at the college infirmary, but he himself absolutely refused to have anything to do with the latter after the first dose. He said "It is too painful." His wife went for the injections only under pressure of some of the members of the mess, who threatened to discharge her if she refused. She is usually more pleasant than her husband.

Very few local women have had the injection. The ones whom the author had the opportunity of asking mostly also replied, "It is too painful." The woman who is included in the above list of injected persons is a widow and goes to meetings of temple prayers and other similar functions regularly, but she is also very inclined toward the outsider's ways of life. She owns a part of the house which is the "women's Dormitory" of the missionary college

and knows practically all the girls. She is particularly friendly with some of them and takes pride in her new friendships. Her taking of the injection has nothing to do with her old belief which remains as firm as before.

In general, if not for special circumstances, the attitude of the adult population towards anti-choleric injection is not yet one of clear tolerance. The answer to the outsider's persuasion is often, "It is too painful. This is an easy refuge, which shows that the speaker in fact does not believe in its usefulness at all; for when there is need (as when a heavy illness like jaundice has befallen a person), most local men or women will not hesitate to allow native practitioners or quacks to insert long silver needles, whether in the cardiac or in the abdominal region.

But even the priests and their assistants may not be against the injection as a personal practice. During the epidemic an assistant priest (in ordinary dress) applied for an injection at one of the stations. The man in charge of the injection asked him what "methods" he thought most effective in preventing cholera. The priest replied that he did not definitely know. The man then told him that there were three ways, as follows: (1) to drink unboiled water, (2) to read the scriptures and pray to the spirits, and lastly (3) to take an injection. Knowing that the speaker meant to be sarcastic, the priest became angry and beat a hasty retreat without the injection.

This incident was related to the author by a friend who said that he was there when it occurred. The author cannot vouch for its absolute accuracy in all details, but if it did occur as related it shows once again the intrinsic and indiscriminate desire to rely upon as many measures of safeguard as possible. But it reveals also the well known attitude of modern medical officers towards traditional ways of life. This is an extreme attitude of ignorance and intolerance. In West Town during the epidemic there were three persons with full modern medical training. The man in charge of the college infirmary is an American surgeon from Harvard Medical School and a medical missionary of the American Episcopal Church. The superintendent of the hospital is an M.D. from a provincial medical college and considered to be very well experienced through years of practice. The third is a woman, who was also connected with the local hospital. She was trained in Peiping Union Medical College. She belongs to the "Little Flock" and says that she works in the backward place only because of her mission in converting more people to her faith. None of them knows much, or is even interested, about the traditional ways of solving life's problems in the locality. The lady is most zealous in her work of conversion. She could not talk to patients or anybody else for more than five minutes without touching upon the other party's wrong faith. Nothing else is right but her faith and her way of life. The superintendent of the hospital is an earnest soul, serious and meticulous in his practice and is genuinely interested in his role as a reliever of physical distress. He asks no more questions when his medical procedure is over. To him, the local anti-choleric prayer meetings are the absurdity of absurdities.

The American missionary was born in China and has been in China for most of his life. He takes some interest in Min Chia customs, but more in reading the limited published material than in actual contact with the local people. He speaks some Chinese and shows an amazing ability in learning the Chinese calligraphy. From what the author has seen of him and of his interests, he cannot say that the man really aims at a thorough understanding of

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